

# City Manager's Spotlight



**From the desk of City Manager Teresa Wilson**

## **CITY MANAGER'S SPOTLIGHT ON JUNE 2014**

The purpose of the City Manager's Spotlight is to provide details about what is happening in the City and to stay connected with the community. The City Manager's Spotlight on June 2014 reflects information about the Virginia Pack demolition, City LIGHT's, Community Development's OMG Workshop and additional City highlights and accomplishments.

### **CITY LIGHT's: EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

- City Manager Teresa Wilson announced the new employee recognition program City LIGHTs on Tuesday, June 17, 2014 at the City Council meeting in City Hall.



*Mayor Benjamin, City Council and City Manager Wilson pose with City LIGHTs' AWARD recipients, Allen D. Etheredge and Matthew D. Gunning, during City Council Meeting.*

- City LIGHTs is a platform for recognizing employees who engage in random acts of kindness and go above and beyond the call of duty to help those in need or exceed expectations as an employee and ambassador for the City of Columbia. LIGHT is an acronym that represents the values of the program. Employees will be recognized for displaying Leadership, Integrity and Generosity or for having a Helpful attitude and sharing their Talent to help others or benefit the community.
- "There is a light within all of us that only we can dim and this employee recognition program will recognize our staff who let their lights shine brightly," said Wilson.
- In the inaugural launch, Ms. Wilson inducted two employees from the Utilities and Engineering Department into the City LIGHTs program. Allen Donnell Etheredge, Metro WWTP Maintenance Tech II and Matthew Derrick Gunning, Metro WWTP Utility Worker II stopped and assisted two men who got into an accident. One of the accident victims was experiencing a health emergency. Allen and Matthew waited with them until First Responders arrived.

### **CITY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICIALS ANNOUNCED PLANS FOR VIRGINIA PACK SITE**

- The City of Columbia and Richland County School District One officials announced the demolition and future plans for the former Virginia Pack Elementary School site at a press conference held on Friday, June 6, 2014. The demolition project was a result of the collaborative effort of the City, the school district and residents of the Belvedere neighborhood.
- Residents had expressed concerns regarding a need for a recreational presence and community center in the neighborhood. The previous space had become a public safety hazard due to its vacancy.
- "For some time, we've heard requests from the Belvedere Community for more public safety and more community amenities and we have begun to eradicate those problems," said Councilman Brian DeQuincey Newman. Mayor Steve Benjamin, Councilwoman Tameika Isaac Devine and residents of the Belvedere Community also attended the press conference.



*Mayor Benjamin, Councilwoman Devine, Councilman Newman, Richland County School District One Officials and Citizens of the Belvedere Community gather for press conference on June 6, 2014.*

- Approximately two years ago, the process and discussions began. The City of Columbia and Richland County School District One came to an agreement that the facility would be too costly to renovate and the layout prohibited efficient reuse. Through a partnership, the City of Columbia and Richland County School District One agreed to demolish the existing structure and build something different. The agreement was signed by Columbia City Council in October 2013.

- The City of Columbia has an immediate lease of the property effective for 50 years at a cost of \$1 per year. The property had to go through an environmental assessment before anything could be done. Once the assessment was completed work began on the property, which included an extensive abatement process. The project is a continuous effort. When the demolition is completed, the space will be fine-graded to an open playfield (no structure) and will be referred to as the Virginia Pack Open Playfield & Green Space.



*Demolition begins at Virginia Pack Elementary*

- The space will be fully accessible to all residents in the Belvedere community for: cookouts, soccer, football, outdoor gatherings and games for children in the community. It will be the City's responsibility to maintain the property.
- Construction of a facility/community center is based on future funding.

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: OWNING, MAINTAINING & GARDENING (OMG's) OF HOMEOWNERSHIP WORKSHOP**

- June was National Homeownership Month and Community Development celebrated homeownership with the OMG Workshop.
- On Tuesday, June 17, Columbia City Council declared the month of June as National Homeownership Month in Columbia with a proclamation and recognized the Community Development staff for their continual work in increasing homeownership and educating Columbia about the benefits of homeownership. Community partners such as South Carolina Bank and Trust and The Home Depot were honored at the meeting as supporters of the OMG of Homeownership Workshop.
- The department aims to provide opportunities for citizens and neighborhood organizations to



access education and resources that enhance livability and sustainability and that promote a suitable living environment. The OMG of Homeownership was created three years ago and has continued to grow and help residents learn about homeownership.

- The 2014 OMG of Homeownership Workshop was held on Saturday, June 21 at the Midlands Technical College, Northeast Campus. Over 150 people were there to learn more about owning, maintaining and gardening. This workshop is designed for those looking to purchase their first home, long-time owners and those who want to become better homeowners. This year's classes ranged from recycling to home efficiency to credit counseling.



*2014 OMG of Homeownership Workshop Photo Gallery*

- Community Development supports the local economy by providing resources and opportunities for growth. Community Development programs increase homeownership and build neighborhood capacity through excellent customer care. Partnerships with banks, neighborhoods and

organizations allow us to improve the quality of life and continue to make Columbia a world-class city.

### **CITY OF COLUMBIA RECEIVES TOP HONORS FOR CREATIVE JOURNEY PROGRAM**

- The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department's Creative Journey program was awarded Best Neighborhood Program of 2014 at the Neighborhoods, USA 39th annual conference in Eugene, Oregon.
- "Our neighborhoods and the programs offered to our citizens are vital to the quality of life in our great city," City Manager Teresa Wilson stated. "This award reflects the value and high standards of the initiatives that are developed and implemented by our staff. The Best Neighborhood Program award also has special meaning because the 'Creative Journey' program benefits the veterans in our community."
- Creative Journey is an all-volunteer art resource that provides monthly art programs to veterans, military members and military family members. It is a collaborative effort between the City of Columbia, the U.S. Army, local artists, nonprofit organizations and businesses.



*Staff members from the Parks and Recreation Creative Journey program were acknowledged during the June 17<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting.*

- "We are very excited to be recognized by NUSA for the 'Creative Journey' program and for the impact it has had on the many wounded warriors at Fort Jackson," said Jeff Caton, Director of Parks and Recreation. "This program would not have been possible without the compassion for our military by people like Brenda Oliver, Suzy Shealy and all of the volunteers and businesses that came together to make a difference in the lives of our wounded heroes and their families."
- Henderson, Nevada's Mediation Program tied for top honors as the Best Neighborhood Program of 2014. This is the first time in the history of NUSA's Best Neighborhood Program Award that there has been a tie for first place.



## **CITY OF COLUMBIA AWARDED PLAYFUL CITY USA DESIGNATION**

- The City of Columbia was honored as a 2014 Playful City USA designation for the first time by KaBOOM!, in partnership with the Humana Foundation.
- “The City of Columbia is proud to be designated as a Playful City. We are committed to providing services and programs in our parks that will benefit our citizens, especially our youth. This is great news and we encourage everyone to get out and enjoy our wonderful parks this summer,” City Manager Teresa Wilson said.
- The City of Columbia is among 212 cities and towns across the United States named as 2014 Playful City USA honorees. These communities are leaders in playability – the extent to which a city makes it easy for kids to get balanced and active play – and are making play part of the solution that can move the needle on countless urban challenges.
- The City of Columbia Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains 60 city parks and green spaces, 600 acres of city-maintained park land, 55 tennis courts and 16 city pads and ponds. All city parks are open year-round from dawn to dusk with no entrance fees.

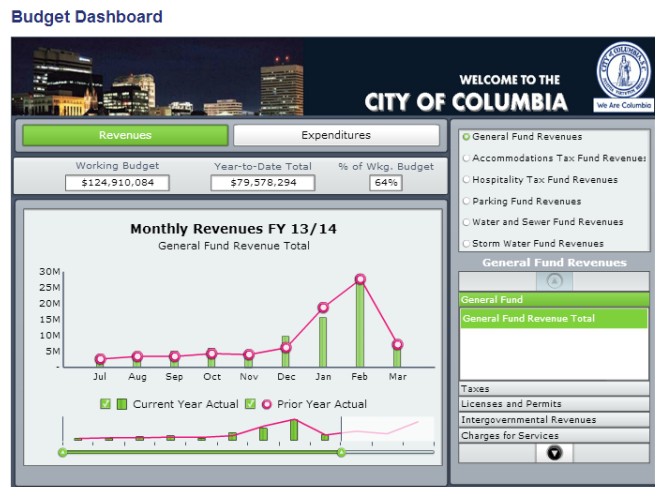


*Kids playing outdoors at local city parks: Hampton Park, Maxcy Gregg Park and Sims Park*

- The KaBOOM! Playful City USA program, sponsored by the Humana Foundation, honors cities, towns and communities across America that are taking bold steps to ensure that all children, especially the 16 million American kids living in poverty, have easy access to balanced and active play in their communities.

## **BUDGET OFFICE: OPERATING BUDGET UPDATE**

- City Council granted final approval of the FY 14/15 Budget on Tuesday, June 24, 2014. The approved Operating Budgets total \$282,731,826 and Capital Projects Budgets total \$52,068,483. The budget reflects the priorities of City Council and seeks to fulfill the goals of the City's Strategic Plan.
- Public Safety remains a top priority for the City of Columbia. The FY 14/15 Budget includes new positions and initiatives aimed to support, encourage, promote and enhance the City's various public safety efforts.
- New initiatives for FY 14/15 are listed below:
  - New positions for the 911 Emergency Communication Center
  - New position for Municipal Court that will help to support around the clock issuance of warrants
  - Youth Crime Prevention program enhancements in Police and Parks & Recreation departments
  - Citywide security camera system and additional funding for street lighting
- Preserving and maintaining city assets is vital to our ability to provide services. Through the use of fund balance and some current year funding, we have proposed capital improvements projects that will help to renovate, replace and enhance our parks, public safety facilities, storm drains and water and sewer system.
- Operational performance, efficiency and customer care remain a priority as staff is dedicating time and resources to focusing on how to provide a high level of operational performance and efficiency and improving Customer Care services for our citizens.



- For more information about the City of Columbia's Operating Budget, view the [Budget Dashboard](#) online at [ColumbiaSC.net](#).

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

### **Dining Encroachment Steps**

Recently, permission to use the right of way has been granted by City Council for several Main Street establishments interested in outdoor dining through a process of an encroachment. Listed below are the Dining Encroachment Steps:



*Citizens enjoying the sunshine while dining outside on Main Street in downtown Columbia.*

1. A customer submits an application and supporting materials for a permanent encroachment to Planning and Development Services (P&DS) staff. The application and checklist can be found on our website at [www.columbiasc.net/planning-development](http://www.columbiasc.net/planning-development).
2. P&DS staff will conduct an on-site inspection to ensure compliance with ADA requirements.
3. The application is circulated to necessary departments in the City to ensure compliance with all applicable City codes. These Departments review the application and provide comments back to P&DS.
4. If any comments require revisions, P&DS staff will contact the applicant to inform him/her of the needed changes and the applicant submits a revised plan.
5. Comments and supporting documents are compiled by P&DS staff in a case summary format and forwarded to the Legal Department for ordinance drafting.
6. The Legal Department forwards the case summary and ordinance to the City Clerk to schedule the matter for City Council consideration.
7. An ordinance requires two affirmative votes (readings) by City Council for approval. Once approval is granted by City Council and the required liability insurance is submitted and verified, the customer is ready to begin using the right-of-way as approved.



Please do not hesitate to contact me with your concerns, suggestions and hopes for our City. I take pleasure in my service to each of you!

All my best,



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